AVATAR

The Last Airbender

Show #211

BOOK TWO: EARTH
CHAPTER ELEVEN: "The Desert"

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ACT ONE

EXT. DESERT - DAY

The kids stand at the scene of the sunken library from the previous episode. Momo flitters around, looking for his big furry friend. Aang looks around, frustrated and angry, like he might start crying. He turns to Toph.

AANG
How could you let them take Appa? Why didn't you stop them?!

TOPH
I couldn't -- the library was sinking -- you guys were still inside and-

AANG
You could have come to get us! I could have saved him!

TOPH
I can hardly feel any vibrations out here! The Sandbenders snuck up on me and there wasn't time for-

AANG
You just didn't care! You never liked Appa! You wanted him gone!

Katara turns to Aang, trying to comfort him, but sternly.

KATARA
Aang, stop it. You know Toph did all she could. She saved our lives!

Sokka looks over the desert, worried.

SOKKA
Who's gonna save our lives now? We'll never make it out of here.

AANG
That's all any of you guys care about -- yourselves. You don't care whether Appa is okay or not.

KATARA
We're all concerned, but we can't afford to be fighting now.

Aang whips out his glider.

AANG
I'm going after Appa.
(to Toph)

KATARA
Aang! Wait!

It's too late. He's gone. They all look around at the barren landscape.

KATARA (cont'd)
We better start walking. We're the only people who know about the solar eclipse. We have to get that information to Ba Sing Se.

SOKKA
You think if we dig out the giant owl he'll give us a ride?

They ignore him and start walking in the direction Aang flew.

EXT. WOODS - DAY

Uncle and Zuko travel through some woods, riding their ostrich horse. . Uncle is still weakened from his encounter with Azula in 2.08, and winces or moans with each bounce of the trotting ostrich horse.

UNCLE
Ow... oh... ew... oh!

Zuko turns around to look at Uncle.

ZUKO
Maybe we should make camp.

UNCLE
No please, don't stop just for me.
(LONG PAINFUL GROAN)

Zuko stops the horse. He jumps off and puts down his pack. Uncle gratefully plops down on the ground to rest. Zuko starts to break out some camping supplies when they hear a rustling in the brush around them. Zuko jumps up, ready to face whoever is on their trail. Uncle sighs.

UNCLE (cont'd)
What now?

The Rough Rhinos ride into the clearing. As Zuko is poised for a fight, Uncle waves him off. Uncle slowly lifts himself up and sees Colonel Mongke. He smiles.

UNCLE (cont'd)
Colonel Mongke? What a pleasant surprise.

Mongke looks at them sternly.

COLONEL MONGKE
If you're surprised we're here, then the Dragon of the West has lost a few steps.

The Rough Rhinos draw their weapons and are poised for a fight. (The following conversation should play with a hint of irony and tension.)

ZUKO
(to Uncle)
You know these guys?

UNCLE
Sure, Colonel Mongke and the Rough Rhinos are legendary. Each one is a different kind of weapons specialist. They are also a very capable singing group.

COLONEL MONGKE
(threatening)
We're not here to give a concert. We're here to apprehend fugitives.

Uncle takes some deep breaths, steadying himself.

UNCLE
Would you like some tea first? I'd love some. How about you, Kachi? I make you as a jasmine man, am I right?

He smiles at Kachi, who just glares at him. Uncle continues smiling at the rest of the Rhinos, taking meditative breaths as he slowly speaks, regaining his strength.

COLONEL MONGKE
Enough stalling.
(to his men)
Round 'em up!

The Rough Rhinos spring into action, but thanks to his stalling tactics, Uncle is ready to fight alongside Zuko. Vachir throws a smoke bomb at the duo which Uncle bats away with his walking stick, hitting Yeh-Lu in the chest with it.

The angered archer fires a shot at Zuko, who catches the arrow between his hands. Zuko Firebends back at him, making his rhino buck and careen into the others. Uncle uses the distraction to grab Zuko. They jump on the ostrich-horse and escape.

UNCLE
It's nice to see old friends.

ZUKO
Too bad you don't have any old friends that don't want to attack you.

UNCLE
(pondering)
Hmm... old friends that don't want to attack me...

They hustle through the woods as Uncle ponders.

EXT. DESERT - DAY

Katara, Sokka, and Toph trudge through the sand under the blazing sun. Momo rides on Sokka's shoulder, and Sokka grabs him, puts him on his head, and extends Momo's wings so that he has some shade. Toph stumbles over a sand hill into Sokka.

SOKKA
Can't you watch where you're-

TOPH
(bitter)
No.

Sokka nods.

SOKKA
Right. Sorry.

KATARA
Come on, guys, we've got to stick together.

Sokka peels Toph off him and sets her to rights.

SOKKA
If I sweat any more I don't think sticking together will be a problem.

TOPH
Katara, can I have some water?

Katara pulls out her bag of bending water.

KATARA
Okay, but we've got to try to conserve it.

Toph and Sokka drink. Sokka swishes the water around in his mouth and makes a yucky face.

SOKKA
We're drinking your bending water.
(smacking his mouth)
You used this on the swamp guy!

TOPH
It does taste swampy.

KATARA
I'm sorry, it's all we have.

SOKKA
(seeing something)
Not any more! Look!

He runs off toward a cactus patch growing near a dirt hill. Katara grabs Toph and escorts her after Sokka. Sokka pulls out his knife and cuts out a section of cactus.

KATARA
Sokka, wait! You shouldn't be eating strange plants.

SOKKA
There's water trapped inside these!

He sucks on the cactus piece and cuts off a little section for Momo, who shoves it in his mouth. He offers a piece to Katara, but she rejects it.

KATARA
I don't know...

Sokka shrugs.

SOKKA
Suit yourself. It's very thirst-quenching though...
(starting to act strange, pupils dilating)
Drink cactus juice, it'll quench you! Nothing's quenchier -- it's the quenchiest!

Katara, looking worried, takes away the cactus he was drinking.

KATARA
Okay, I think you've had enough.

Sokka stares at Toph.

SOKKA
Who lit Toph on fire?

Momo, whose pupils are also dilated, chitters insanely, then flies around in small circles before crashing to the ground.

MOMO
(CHITTERING)

TOPH
(oblivious)
Can I get some of that cactus?

KATARA
I don't think that's a good idea. Come on. We need to find Aang.

She picks up Momo, puts him on Sokka's shoulder, and grabs Sokka's hand. She goes over to Toph, points her in the right direction, and starts the group walking again.

SOKKA
How did we get out here in the middle of the ocean?

Katara sighs and leads the gang away.

EXT. DESERT SKY - DAY

Aang flies over the desert, searching desperately for any sign of Appa's trail. He blows the bison whistle.

AANG
Appa! Appa!

Nothing but the desert wind in response. Aang lands and searches the ground for tracks. Nothing. He stands up and looks around. Empty desert in all directions. Aang's lower lip trembles.

AANG (cont'd)
No!

He winds up in frustration, jumps into the air, and strikes the sandy earth with a massive, angry Airbending strike.

EXT. DESERT - DAY

As Katara, Sokka and Toph trudge along, they see what looks like a mushroom cloud rising from the sand.

KATARA
What is that?

TOPH
What? What is what?

Sokka and Momo stare at the mushroom cloud. They exchange worried looks.

SOKKA
It's a giant mushroom.
(suddenly happy)
Maybe it's friendly!

KATARA
Let's just keep moving.
(to herself)
I hope Aang's okay.

SOKKA
Friendly mushroom. Mushy giant friend.

Katara gets them walking again.

EXT. MISTY PALMS OASIS CANTINA - DAY

PULL BACK TO REVEAL-

Xin Fu and Master Yu standing at a nearby sign board covered with wanted posters. They talk to the SERVER who we saw dicing fruit in 2.10.

SERVER
Yeah, a little barefoot blind girl and her friends passed through here a few days ago.

MASTER YU
Did they give you any indication where they were headed?

SERVER
Maybe you could give me a little incentive?

He rubs his fingers together in the "give me money" gesture.

XIN FU
You suggesting I break your fingers?

The server quickly puts his fingers away.

SERVER
They went in the desert. Too bad there's almost no chance they survived.

XIN FU
That's okay, 'cause she's wanted dead or alive.

The server heads back inside.

MASTER YU
No she's not. I'm certain her father wants her alive.

Xin Fu shrugs.

XIN FU
(noticing something)
Hey, look! Fire Nation wanted posters!

He points to wanted posters of Uncle and Zuko displayed on the board.

MASTER YU
So?

XIN FU
So, look who's here.

He points to Uncle and Zuko entering the cantina.

EXT. DESERT - DAY

Katara, Sokka, and Toph continue walking. Aang comes gliding up and lands. He hangs his head. Katara walks over to him and puts a hand on his shoulder.

KATARA
I'm sorry, Aang.

Aang plops down in the sand, ignoring her.

KATARA (cont'd)
I know it's hard for you right now, but we need to focus on getting out of here.

Aang shrugs sadly, utterly defeated.

AANG
What's the difference? We won't survive without Appa. We all know it.

Katara tries to force some hope on him.

KATARA
Come on, Aang, we can do this if we work together. Right Toph?

Toph shrugs.

TOPH
As far as I can feel, we're trapped in a giant bowl of sand pudding. I got nothing.

KATARA
Sokka? Any ideas how to find Ba Sing Se?

Sokka and Momo are staring up at the sky.

SOKKA
Why don't we ask the circle birds?

Katara looks up and sees two ugly BUZZARD-WASPS circling lazily overhead, just waiting for them to die. Katara looks back at her group -- Aang is hopeless, Toph nearly helpless, and Sokka out of his mind -- they're a mess. She realizes that either she keeps the gang moving or they're all dead.

KATARA
We're getting out of this desert and we're going to do it together. Aang get up. Everybody hold hands.

She grabs Aang's hand, Aang grabs Toph's hand, Toph grabs Sokka's hand and Sokka drags Momo behind, half flying.

KATARA (cont'd)
We can do this. We have to.

She looks over her shoulder at the birds as she leads the group into the desolate wasteland.

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

EXT. DESERT - SUNDOWN

The kids trudge through the desert, exhausted, as the sun starts to go down. Katara looks around at her weary compatriots and stops.

KATARA
I think we should stop for the night.

They all immediately drop to the ground.

TOPH
Is there any more water?

Katara holds up her water pouch. It's almost empty.

KATARA
This is the last of it. Everyone can have a little drink.

Momo grabs the pouch and squeezes it, causing the water to spill everywhere!

SOKKA
(freaking out)
Momo, no! You've killed us all!

KATARA
No he hasn't.

Katara easily bends the spilled water back into the pouch.

SOKKA
Oh, right. Bending.

She squeezes a little water into Momo's mouth and passes the pouch to Toph.

KATARA
Sokka, let me see the things you got from the library.

Sokka, still feeling the effects of the cactus juice, gets jumpy and suspicious.

SOKKA
What? I didn't steal anything! Who told you that?

SOKKA (cont'd)
(turning to Momo)
It was you! You ratted me out!

MOMO
(FRIGHTENED CHITTERING)

Katara rolls her eyes.

KATARA
Sokka, I was there.

She grabs Sokka's bag and starts pulling out charts and maps.

AANG
It doesn't matter. None of those will tell us where Appa is.

KATARA
No, but we can find out which way Ba Sing Se is.

She looks through the documents, then finds a star chart.

KATARA (cont'd)
We can use the stars to guide us. That way we can travel at night when it's cool and rest during the day.

She looks around at the group for some response to her plan, but everyone is zoned out. She sighs.

KATARA (cont'd)
Just try to get some sleep. We'll start again in a few hours.

Everyone lies down silently. Katara looks at them all, worried.

INT. MISTY PALMS OASIS CANTINA - NIGHT

Zuko and Uncle survey the crowd in the cantina. It's a mixed bag of travelers, many of them shady-looking characters.

ZUKO
No one here is going to help us. These people just look like filthy wanderers.

UNCLE
So do we.
(noticing something)
Ah. This is interesting.

He points to a corner where FUNG, a greasy little old man who wears a white lotus flower on his lapel, is setting up a Pai Sho game. Uncle smiles.

UNCLE (cont'd)
I think I've found our friend.

He starts over to Fung. Zuko grimaces.

ZUKO
You brought us here to gamble on Pai Sho?

UNCLE
I don't think this is a gamble.

As they walk over, we see Xin Fu and Master Yu sitting in a corner, watching. Xin Fu starts to get up.

XIN FU
Let's take them now.

Master Yu puts a hand on his shoulder, holding him back.

MASTER YU
This place is full of desperate characters. If they find out we're collecting a bounty, we might have to fight them all just to keep our prize. Patience.

Xin Fu slowly sits back down and they wait. Meanwhile, Uncle sits down at the Pai Sho table with Fung.

UNCLE
May I have this game?

Fung looks him over cautiously, then gestures for Uncle to sit down.

FUNG
The guest has the first move.

Uncle spreads out his tiles, then puts down the white lotus tile. Fung nods curiously.

FUNG (cont'd)
I see you favor the white lotus gambit. Not many still cling to the ancient ways.

Uncle nods and rubs his hands together in front of him.

UNCLE
Those who do can always find a friend.

Fung rubs his hands together like Uncle's mirror image.

FUNG
Then let us play.

Fung and Uncle quickly slam down piece after piece, looking like they're not so much playing a game as arranging the pieces on the board into a pre-ordained pattern. Zuko watches with growing curiosity. When Uncle and Fung finish, they reach across the board and give each other an elaborate secret handshake. Fung smiles.

FUNG (cont'd)
Welcome, brother. The White Lotus opens wide to those who know her secrets.

Zuko shakes his head, frustrated.

ZUKO
What are you old gas-bags talking about?

Uncle gives him a patronizing smile.

UNCLE
I always tried to tell you that Pai Sho is more than just a game.

Off in the corner, Xin Fu leaps up.

XIN FU
I'm not waiting all night for these geezers to finish yapping! It's over. You two fugitives are coming with me.

He strides over toward Zuko and Uncle. Master Yu sighs and follows. Zuko and Uncle immediately spot them and jump up to fight. There's a dramatic moment, as the four men face off. But before anything can get started, Fung jumps up and points at Uncle and Zuko.

FUNG
I knew it! You two are wanted criminals with a giant bounty on your heads!

Immediately, every person in the cantina turns to look at Zuko and Uncle. Zuko turns to Uncle, furious.

ZUKO
I thought you said he would help!

UNCLE
He is. Just watch.

Fung turns to Xin Fu and Master Yu.

FUNG
You think you're going to capture them and collect all that gold?

CANTINA GUY
Gold?

Now everyone in the cantina stares at Xin Fu and Master Yu, clearly hungry for a giant reward. Master Yu looks around at the greedy crowd. Many of the people in the cantina are starting to finger their weapons, ready to fight to claim Uncle and Zuko.

MASTER YU
Uh, maybe we shouldn't...

Xin Fu charges at Uncle, Zuko and Fung. As he does, everyone in the bar leaps forward to stop him and grab the fugitives. It's a massive bar brawl with overturned tables, broken bottles, the whole nine yards. In the midst of the action, Fung grabs Uncle and Zuko and hurries them out a back door. Master Yu sees them slipping away, but is too busy fighting off cantina patrons to follow.

EXT. DESERT - NIGHT

Katara shakes the kids awake.

KATARA
Come on. Get up. We need to go.

As everyone wakes up, Toph smacks her dry mouth.

TOPH
Yesterday my mouth tasted like mud. Now it just tastes like sand.
(MORE)

TOPH (cont'd)
I never thought I'd miss the taste of mud so much.

Katara goes over to Aang and softly puts her hand on his shoulder.

AANG
I'm awake. I couldn't sleep.

KATARA
Well, we need to get moving if we want to get out of this sand pit.

Aang slowly sits up and looks at the moon. He gets an excited look on his face.

AANG
Appa!

They all look up. A dark shadow passes in front of the moon.

SOKKA
Appa! But why would Princess Yue need him? She's the moon. She flies by herself.

KATARA
It's just a cloud.

Aang sadly hangs his head. But Katara gets a hopeful look.

KATARA (cont'd)
Wait, a cloud! Here.

She hands him her water pouch.

KATARA (cont'd)
Fly up and bend the water from that cloud into my pouch.

Aang unenthusiastically takes the pouch, grabs his glider, and takes off. As the kids watch from the ground, Aang darts back and forth in front of the moon. We see the cloud that was there disappear. Aang heads back towards earth.

He lands and hands the pouch to Katara. She inspects it and finds that it's hardly been filled at all.

KATARA (cont'd)
Wow. There's hardly any in here.

Aang turns on her, angry.

AANG
I'm sorry, okay? It's a desert cloud. I did all I could. What's anyone else doing? What are you doing?

Katara looks hurt, but holds herself together for the team.

KATARA
Trying to keep everyone together. Let's just get moving.
(checking her star chart)
We need to head this direction.

She starts leading her group over a dune. As they walk, Toph stubs her toe on something an d tumbles forward.

TOPH
Ow! Crud! I am so sick of not feeling where I'm going! And what idiot buried a boat in the middle of the desert?

KATARA
A boat?

TOPH
Believe me, I kicked it hard enough to feel plenty of vibrations.

Katara gets down on the ground and starts brushing sand away, revealing a sand-sailer abandoned or lost by the Sandbenders.

KATARA
It's one of the gliders the Sandbenders use. And look-

She points to a primitive compass mounted on the front.

KATARA (cont'd)
It's got some kind of compass on it. I bet it can point us out of here. Aang, you can bend a breeze so we can sail it. We're going to make it!

She keeps digging out the sailer, and the others help her. The kids' faces finally show a glimmer of hope.

INT. FLOWER SHOP - NIGHT

Uncle and Zuko walk through a flower shop, guided by Fung.

FUNG
It is an honor to welcome such a high-ranking member of the Order of the White Lotus. Being a grand master, you must know so many secrets.

He looks at Uncle expectantly, who just smiles slyly, enjoying the attention. Zuko fumes.

ZUKO
Now that you've played Pai Sho, are you going to do some flower arranging, or is someone in this club going to offer some real help?

UNCLE
(to Fung)
You must forgive my nephew. He is not an initiate and has little appreciation for the cryptic arts.

They reach a door in the back of the shop. Fung does a secret knock, and the door is opened by a DOORMAN wearing a white robe with an embroidered lotus design.

DOORMAN
Who knocks at the garden gate?

UNCLE
One who has eaten the fruit and tasted its mysteries.

The man bows and steps aside. In the room we see a group of men all wearing similar robes. Zuko starts to follow Fung and Uncle inside, but Uncle stops him.

UNCLE (cont'd)
I'm afraid it's members only. Wait out here.

He closes the door, leaving Zuko standing among the flowers. Zuko looks around to see if anyone is watching then sniffs one and smiles.

EXT. DESERT - NIGHT

The kids speed along on their sand-sailer, using the compass to guide them as Aang bends wind into their sail. Katara looks concerned.

KATARA
The needle on this compass doesn't seem to be pointing north according to my charts.

Sokka just smiles, enjoying the ride.

SOKKA
Take it easy, little lady. I'm sure the sand folks who built this baby know how to get around here.

As they crest a dune, they see a giant rock mesa directly ahead, looming over the otherwise empty terrain (like Ayer's Rock in the Australian outback).

KATARA
That's what the compass is pointing to: that giant rock. It must be the magnetic center of the desert.

Toph perks up.

TOPH
A rock? Yes! Let's go!

KATARA
Maybe we can find some water there.

Aang darkens.

AANG
Maybe we can find some Sandbenders.

EXT. GIANT ROCK - NIGHT

The kids stand on top of the rock and look around. There's nothing but desert stretching as far as the eye can see in all directions. Toph sighs contentedly and lies down.

TOPH
Ahh. Finally. Solid ground.

She swings her arms and legs around, carving a "rock angel" like a kid making a snow angel in winter. Sokka looks around and takes a deep breath.

SOKKA
I think my head is starting to clear out the cactus juice.
(he looks around)
And look!

He leads them over to a cave-like opening.

INT. CAVE - CONTINUOUS

As the kids wander through the cave, they see a honey-like goo dripping from the ceiling. Sokka immediately sticks his hand in some and licks it up, then spits it out.

SOKKA
Ew. Tastes like rotten penguin meat. Aww, I feel woozy.

Katara gives him a harsh look.

KATARA
You've been hallucinating on cactus juice all day, and then you just lick something you find stuck to the wall of a cave?

Sokka just shrugs.

SOKKA
I have a natural curiosity.

Toph looks a little uneasy.

TOPH
I don't think this is a normal cave. This was carved by something.

AANG
Yeah, look at the shape.

The cave has taken on a precisely hexagonal shape.

TOPH
There's something buzzing in here. Something that's coming for us.

Now they all hear the buzzing. They run back to the mouth of the cave while the buzzing behind them grows louder. As they reach the outside, where the sun is beginning to rise, they hit the deck and five buzzard-wasps come roaring out of the cave mouth behind them. The buzzard-wasps wheel around, see the kids, then head straight for them!

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

EXT. DESERT ROCK MESA - SUNRISE

As the sun rises overhead, the kids try to fend off the attacking buzzard-wasps. Aang blasts at them with his Airbending to hold them back while Toph wildly fires rocks in the air. One of them lands near Sokka.

SOKKA
What are you doing? That rock almost crushed me!

TOPH
Sorry, I can't tell where they are in the air!

SOKKA
I got this one!

He swings wildly in the air with his club, nowhere near any wasps.

KATARA
Sokka, there's nothing there!

Sokka looks around, confused.

SOKKA
I guess my head's not as clear as I thought.

KATARA
We have to get out of here. I'm completely out of water to bend.

One of the wasps swoops down and grabs Momo and starts to carry him off.

AANG
Momo!

He pulls out his glider.

AANG (cont'd)
I'm not losing anyone else out here!

He takes off after the wasp. Katara grabs the others and pulls them together in a clump.

KATARA
Come on, we're going down.

They start to pick their way down the side of the rock. A buzzard-wasp starts to dive at them. Katara grabs Toph's arm and points it at the attacking wasp.

KATARA (cont'd)
Toph! Shoot a rock right there!
Fire!

Toph fires a rock in the air that smacks the buzzard wasp in the nose, sending it spiralling away, confused but unhurt.

SOKKA
Yeah! You got it!
(turning to Katara, unsure)
She got it, right?

KATARA
Yes. Now let's move.

EXT. SKY - CONTINUOUS

Aang pursues the buzzard-wasp that has Momo. He catches up with it and flies underneath it. Aang flips upside down so that he is facing the stomach of the wasp where Momo is trapped in its claws. Aang Airbends the wasp in the abdomen and it releases Momo, who flies to safety. The wasp turns and flies away from Aang, but Aang flips his glider back over and continues to bear down on the buzzard-wasp, his eyes full of fury. He reaches it again, and in one awesome move he transforms his glider back into a staff and swings it at the wasp, generating a massive Airbending strike which knocks the wasp out of the air and smashes it into the ground in a crumpled heap. Aang turns the staff back into a glider and flies off.

Momo flutters over to Aang and looks at him, freaked out by this violent act, so unlike the usual Aang. Aang, still filled with rage, seems not to notice. He turns around and flies back to the rock. Momo hesitates a moment, then follows.

EXT. ROCK - CONTINUOUS

Katara, Sokka, and Toph are almost down the rock. Katara wheels Toph around at another attacking buzzard-wasp.

KATARA
On your left!

Toph fires another rock that wings the wasp and knocks it away.

Suddenly a whirlwind of sand surrounds them, simultaneously choking them, blocking their view and driving the buzzard-wasps away.

As the sandstorm dies down, the kids turn to see that they have been saved by a group of Sandbenders. Aang catches up with them and lands, glaring angrily at the Sandbenders.

INT. FLOWER SHOP - DAY

Zuko dozes in a chair near the back door. Uncle and Fung come out and Zuko starts awake.

ZUKO
What's going on? Is the club meeting over?

UNCLE
Everything is taken care of. We're heading to Ba Sing Se.

ZUKO
Ba Sing Se? Why would we go to the Earth Kingdom capital?

FUNG
The city is filled with refugees. No one will notice two more.

UNCLE
We can hide in plain sight there, and it's the safest place in the world from the Fire Nation. Even I couldn't break through to the city.

Another MAN rushes in the shop with a handful of papers.

MAN
I have the passports for our guests. But there are two men out on the street looking for them.

They look out the front window and see Xin Fu and Master Yu questioning people on the street, waving wanted posters of Zuko and Uncle.

XIN FU
You see these guys?

EXT. DESERT - DAY

The kids are face to face with a tribe of SANDBENDERS, led by a gruff man named SHA-MO.

Next to him stands his burly son GHASHIUN (seen as SANDBENDER LEADER in episode 210). Ghashiun nervously eyes Toph.

SHA-MO
What are you doing in our land with a Sandbender sailer? From the looks of it you stole it from the Hami tribe.

KATARA
We found the sailer abandoned in the desert. We're traveling with the Avatar.

Sha-Mo looks at Aang, a little impressed.

KATARA (cont'd)
Our bison was stolen and we have to get to Ba Sing Se.

Ghashiun steps forward, overreacting because of his guilt.

GHASHIUN
You dare accuse our people of theft while you ride in on a stolen sand-sailer?

Sha-Mo turns to his son, annoyed.

SHA-MO
Quiet, Ghashiun! No one accused our people of anything. If what they say is true, we must give them hospitality.

GHASHIUN
Sorry, Father.

Toph whispers to the group.

TOPH
I recognize the son's voice. He's the one that stole Appa.

KATARA
Are you sure?

TOPH
I never forget a voice.

Aang steps forward, furious, pointing at Ghashiun.

AANG
You stole Appa! Where is he? What did you do to him?

He's starting to look very threatening, and the Sandbenders take a step back. Sha-Mo looks at his son.

GHASHIUN
They're lying! They're the thieves!

Without hesitation, Aang fires an Airbending strike that destroys one of their sand-sailers. He looks at them, cold.

AANG
Where is my bison?

INT. FLOWER SHOP - DAY

Xin Fu and Master Yu walk in the flower shop, carrying Uncle and Zuko's wanted posters. They both have bumps and bruises from the brawl at the cantina. As they enter, the man who brought Uncle and Zuko's passports pushes a cart out of the shop carrying two giant pots of white lotuses. He stops for a moment, scared. Xin Fu waves the posters at the flower shop proprietor.

XIN FU
Hey, you! Where are these men?

The White Lotus member who opened the door in the earlier scene is behind the counter of the flower shop.

XIN FU (cont'd)
I got a tip that they're in your shop.

DOORMAN
As you can see, no one is here but us.

Doorman nods at the guy pushing the cart, who heads out of the shop. Xin Fu and Master Yu don't seem to notice.

MASTER YU
We know all about your secret back room.
(to Xin Fu)
Kick it down.

Xin Fu winds up.

DOORMAN
Hey! That room's for flowers only!

Xin Fu kicks down the door and leads Master Yu in.

INT. BACKROOM - CONTINUOUS

The room is empty except for a white lotus Pai Sho tile on the floor. Master Yu picks it up.

MASTER YU
Some unlucky soul... has an incomplete Pai Sho set.

Xin Fu gives him a withering look and knocks the tile out of his hand.

XIN FU
(FED-UP GROWL) Let's go back to finding the girl.

EXT. BACK ALLEY - DAY

The man from the flower shop stops pushing his cart. He looks around, then knocks on the two giant pots of white lotuses. Zuko and Uncle hop out of the pots. They look around to see if anyone is watching, then wave goodbye to the cart man and hustle down the road.

EXT. DESERT - DAY

Aang blasts another sand-sailer to bits. He looks at the Sandbenders, enraged.

AANG
You tell me where he is. Now.

Sha-Mo looks at Ghashiun, who is clearly about to crack.

SHA-MO
What did you do?

GHASHIUN
It wasn't me!

TOPH
You said to put a muzzle on him!

AANG
You muzzled Appa?!

He blasts another sand-sailer and looks like he's about to attack the Sandbenders.

GHASHIUN
I'm sorry! I didn't know it belonged to the Avatar!

AANG
Tell me where Appa is!

GHASHIUN
I traded him to some merchants. He's probably in Ba Sing Se by now. They were going to sell him there.

Aang is totally enraged and his eyes start to glow as he slips into the Avatar state.

GHASHIUN (cont'd)
Please, we'll escort you out of the desert. We'll help however we can!

Aang has stopped listening. The wind starts to whip around him.

SOKKA
Just get out of here! Run!

He grabs Toph and they run to the Sandbenders, leading them away from Aang as a whirlwind whips around him. Katara stays where she is, looking at Aang in all of his Avatar fury. She slowly walks into the whirlwind, bracing herself so as not to be swept away by Aang's rage. She reaches the center, and without saying a word, hugs Aang. Aang continues to glow angrily, but Katara just holds him. Finally, the wind starts to die down.

As the wind stops, Aang closes his glowing eyes and starts to cry.

FADE TO BLACK.

THE END